



## Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire LMC Ltd

### Weekly Update for Practices: Friday 10<sup>th</sup> July 2020

#### 1) Safety First

Over the past week or two we have been hearing increasing concerns about the local provision and resourcing of 'hot' sites to assess patients with confirmed or suspected COVID-19. It is understandable that given the low levels of virus in the community, a review of capacity within 'hot' sites seems sensible. However, of concern is the assumption, in some areas, that this means that F2F care of these patients can now be provided within 'normal' general practice. Not only is this unsafe for general practice staff and patients, it also undermines the NHSE guidance for safe primary care provision for shielded patients, and is also against the guidance of the [Standard Operating Procedure](#) that advises that the majority of patients with symptoms of COVID-19 should be managed without F2F assessment in practices.

Your duty as a GP is to assess and provide safe care for your patients. If it is not safe for their care to be provided within general practice, given the current constraints imposed by the COVID-19 then you need to arrange for this care to be provided elsewhere. If there is no 'hot hub' provision locally that your patient can access, then it may be appropriate for you to refer the patient to attend A/E where they should have provision for the safe F2F assessment of patients with symptoms of COVID-19.

#### 2) Looking to the future

Now that the initial peak in COVID-19 has settled, general practice is left operating in a completely new landscape, which is likely to exist for at least the next year or so. However, the large majority of work remains the same, which leaves us looking at what our 'new normal' will be.

In order to support practices, we have written a [paper](#) which sets out to help focus on areas of general practice life that might need consideration for change, either in capacity, provision or implementation.

We recognise that every practice and partnership is unique, so each will have its own specific challenges to overcome. However, we hope that there will be something in here that will resonate with everyone and will help local general practice to move into the future with confidence.

#### 3) Fitness to fly certificates

We have heard that some patients are asking practices about fitness to fly certificates in the light of COVID-19.

Fitness to fly certificates are not part of GMS contractual work and so GPs are under no obligation to issue them. If you do decide to issue a certificate, then you can charge a private fee.

The BMA advises caution when considering undertaking this sort of work, as there can be potential medico-legal implications.

'We discourage doctors from signing certificates which indicate that the patient will, for example, be fit for the duration of the holiday, as current fitness is not a guide to future fitness. Doctors can only report on what is written in the patient notes and reporting on future fitness could have medico-legal consequences for you.'

Fitness to fly assessments can be complex and may require specialist training or knowledge especially when advising around patients with underlying chronic health conditions.

There are specialist private clinics that can undertake these assessments and provide necessary certificates.

One also has to be mindful that the NHS Clinical Negligence Scheme for General Practice will not cover liabilities arising from the issuing of one of these certificates so any clinician issuing a certificate would need to check that their MDO covers this.

(With thanks to Wessex LMC for providing this information)

#### **4) CCG Mergers**

As you will be aware, CCGs in England are being asked to merge into their STPs/ICSs footprint by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022. Our two STPs/ICSs are at different points along this journey, with BLMK aiming to complete a merger by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021, while H&WE looks more likely to wait until 2022.

In order for these mergers to take place, first the members of each of the CCGs (the practices) will need to vote to change the existing CCG constitutions to a new single constitution that will sit across each of the CCGs. Last week BLMK released the draft of their new constitution, with a vote on the changes to be held at the end of July. We felt that this timeline did not allow enough time for practices and the LMC to fully understand the proposed changes. Working with BBO LMC, we requested that the vote be delayed by a month. The CCGs have accepted this change and the vote will now take place during the week beginning 17<sup>th</sup> August. We are now in the process of reviewing the draft constitution and will be discussing the implications with our reps at the Bedfordshire committee meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> July.

#### **5) NHS Practitioner Health FREE Webinars**

All of these events are available freely to NHS staff. Webinars and podcasts are delivered by experts in their field. Common rooms and support spaces are hosted by NHS practitioner Health Clinicians and trained psychologists. For more information please visit <https://www.practitionerhealth.nhs.uk/upcoming-events>

Covid-19 Workforce Wellbeing Resources <https://www.practitionerhealth.nhs.uk/covid-19-workforce-wellbeing>

## 6) RCGP FREE Webinars

(Please select links below for more information, terms of registration and how to book)

- [Unseen, unheard: Safeguarding children during COVID-19](#), 14<sup>th</sup> July
- [Surviving and Thriving as a First5 GP: Getting the Most Out of Your Early Career](#), 16<sup>th</sup> July
- [Women's Health and Contraception](#), 16<sup>th</sup> July
- [Understanding the carbon footprint of primary care & taking action to reduce it](#), 17<sup>th</sup> July
- [Essentials Webinar Series | Preventing premature mortality in patients with a learning disability](#), 21<sup>st</sup> July
- [Essentials Webinar Series | Remote management of common neurological presentations in primary care](#), 22<sup>nd</sup> July
- [COVID-19: Welcome back Late Career and GP Returners!](#) 22<sup>nd</sup> July
- [Essentials Webinar Series | Addressing the complex problems that patients with a learning disability experience](#), 28<sup>th</sup> July
- [Connecting together: The value of relationships & groups for team wellbeing](#), 29<sup>th</sup> July
- [Essentials Webinar Series | Lockdown and alcohol: the role of primary care](#), 29<sup>th</sup> July

## 7) Primary Care Direct FREE online events

PCD is a consortium of primary care specialists where you'll find all the guidance and advice you require in one place – saving time, money and resources.

- **Primary Care Network (PCN) Managers' Huddle, Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> July, 9.00 – 10.00am**  
We know that being a PCN Manager involves deadlines, managing relationships and trying to make your network thrive which can be overwhelming and sometimes lonely. So come and have a coffee and chat with other PCN Managers from across the country via Teams about what it's like working in your primary care networks at the moment. [View here for more information and to how to register.](#)
- **Practice Managers' Huddle, Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> July, 3.30 – 5.00pm**  
Led by practice managers, James Davies (Amicus Healthcare) and Tracy Dell (Plane Trees Group Practice), come together and hear from other PMs across the country about what it's like working in general practice at the moment. [View here for more information and to how to register.](#)

## 8) LMC NHS Pension Scheme Update Webinar for Practice Managers

Date: Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> July

Time: 12:30 – 13:30

Charge: £10

Format: Webinar covering the following:

- 1995/2008/2015 Schemes and peripheral benefits
- Annual Allowance / Tapered Annual Allowance – impact of the recent changes, options available, deadlines for Scheme Pays
- Lifetime Allowance – implications of exceeding, protection, options available

- 24 Hour Retirement – the requirements outlining the recent suspension of 16hour limits, why, when and how
- The impact of reduced income for some, the mortgage payment holiday and the deferral of income tax.

[Register here](#)

**Please note:**

*Places are limited. Registering does not guarantee your place.*

## 9) LMC GP Pensions Update Webinar

Date: Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> July

Time: 18:30 - 19:30

Charge: £10

Format: Webinar covering the following:

- 1995/2008/2015 Schemes and peripheral benefits
- Annual Allowance / Tapered Annual Allowance – impact of the recent changes, options available, deadlines for Scheme Pays
- Lifetime Allowance – implications of exceeding, protection, options available
- 24 Hour Retirement – the requirements outlining the recent suspension of 16hour limits, why, when and how
- The impact of reduced income for some, the mortgage payment holiday and the deferral of income tax.

[Register here](#)

**Please note:**

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## 10) BHLMC Job Board

Advertise your practice vacancies with us on our Job Board on the website [here](#). If you are interested in posting an advert please contact [lmcadmin@bhlmc.co.uk](mailto:lmcadmin@bhlmc.co.uk) for more information.

If you have missed any of our regular bulletins for practices, please visit the [Weekly Updates](#) section of our website.

If you are a Locum and would like to receive mailings and updates from Beds & Herts LMC Ltd please click here to complete the [online form](#) with your details and we can add you to our database.

Wellbeing for GPs: [Visit our webpage](#).

Contact Us:  
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